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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
Eleventh meeting
New York, 31 August 2000

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Results of the nineteenth to twenty-third sessions of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Since the tenth meeting of the States parties, on 17 February 1998, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has held five sessions, namely the nineteenth, from 22 June to 10 July 1998; twentieth, from 19 January to 5 February 1999; twenty-first, from 7 to 25 June 1999; twenty-second, from 17 January to 4 February 2000; and twenty-third, from 12 to 30 June 2000. During those sessions, the Committee adopted one general recommendation (24), on article 12 of the Convention;[1] two statements, one on reservations to the Convention[2] and the other on the legal framework for the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the links between the Convention and the Platform for Action.[3] It also adopted 13 decisions and 2 suggestions, as follows:

A. Nineteenth session

Decision 19/I
Timing of pre-session working group[4]

The Committee, at its eighteenth session, decided to effect a transition to a pattern of work in which the pre-session working group meets at the session prior to which the reports before that pre-session will be considered. The Committee therefore decided that, in order for the transition to this new pattern of work to be effected smoothly, the pre-session working group for the twenty-first session would meet as a third working group during the twentieth session and would remain, if necessary, for up to three days after the twentieth session to consolidate the lists of issues and questions with respect to the reports to be considered at the twenty-first session.

Decision 19/II
Concluding comments[4]

The Committee decided to revise its procedures and format for the elaboration of concluding comments with a view to streamlining the comments, while retaining flexibility (see paras. 395 to 397).

Decision 19/III
List of issues and questions for consideration of periodic reports[4]

The Committee requested the Secretariat to prepare drafts, lists of issues and questions with regard

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to periodic reports, based on an analytical comparison of current States parties' reports, with previous reports and the Committee's discussion thereon and other relevant information, including concluding observations of other treaty bodies. The draft lists prepared by the Secretariat would be sent in advance of the meeting of the pre-session working group to those Committee members designated as country rapporteurs.

B. Twentieth session

Decision 20/I
Non-governmental organizations[5]

Recalling its decisions 18/I and 18/II, adopted at its eighteenth session, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women decided that representatives of national and international non-governmental organizations should be invited to provide country-specific information on States parties whose reports are before the Committee in an informal meeting of the Working Group of the Whole.

C. Twenty-first session

Decision 21/I
Exceptional reports[6]

The Committee decided that it may sometimes be necessary to request exceptional reports from States parties, under article 18.1 (b) of the Convention, in order to obtain and examine the information on an actual or potential violation of women's human rights, where there is special cause for concern about such violation. In this respect, the Committee decided to adopt the following standards and guidelines:

(a) There should be reliable and adequate information indicating grave or systematic violations of women's human rights;

(b) Such violations are those that are gender-based or directed at women because of their sex;

(c) Reports should focus on a particular issue or issues identified by the Committee;

(d) States parties shall submit their reports for consideration at such session as the Committee determines.

Decision 21/II
Observations by States parties on concluding comments[6]

The Committee decided that observations by States parties on concluding comments will be circulated to members of the Committee and their receipt acknowledged in an annex to the Committee's next annual report to the General Assembly. The Committee may decide to make available such observations independently of its annual report.

Suggestion 21/I
Report on efforts towards universal ratification, timely reporting and the acceptance of the amendment to article 20.1 of the Convention[7]

The Committee suggested that a report be provided at each session of the Committee on efforts by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women with regard to universal ratification, timely reporting and acceptance of the amendment of article 20.1 of the Convention.

D. Twenty-second session

Decision 22/I
Reports of States parties[8]

The Committee decided that the Chairperson should address letters to those States parties that have not submitted two or more reports required under article 18 of the Convention recalling their treaty obligations in this regard.

Decision 22/II
List of issues and questions of the pre-session working group[8]

The Committee decided that the list of issues and questions forumlated by the pre-session working group on States parties whose reports are under consideration and the responses of those States thereto should be circulated to experts prior to the session at which the reports are to be examined.

Decision 22/III
Provision of information by States parties[8]

The Committee decided that States parties presenting reports that wish to provide additional information through audio-visual or electronic means, including video, film and slides, should inform the Committee through the Secretariat of their intention to do so at least one month in advance of the presentation of their reports to the Committee.

Decision 22/IV
Pre-session working group[8]

The Committee decided that in drawing up the list of issues and questions with regard to periodic reports, the pre-session working group should formulate a short list of questions and issues focusing, if possible, on major areas of concern in regard to implementation of the Convention by States parties.

E. Twenty-third session

Decision 23/I
Overdue reports required under article 18 of the Convention

The Committee decided on an exceptional basis and as a temporary measure in order to address the backlog of reports awaiting consideration and to encourage States parties to fulfil their reporting obligations within article 18 of the Convention, to invite States parties with overdue reports to combine outstanding reports in a single document. The Committee decided that the Secretariat should inform the relevant States parties of this decision.

Decision 23/II
General recommendation on article 4 of the Convention

The Committee decided to prepare a general recommendation on article 4 of the Convention. Bearing in mind the Committee's three-stage process for the preparation of general recommendations adopted at its seventeenth session, the Committee decided that a general discussion and exchange of views with specialized agencies, other bodies of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations should take place during its twenty-fourth session, in January/February 2001.

Decision 23/III
Revised rules of procedure

The Committee decided to adopt the revised rules of procedure [CEDAW/C/2000/II/WG.1/WP.1] as to substance, but subject to editing by the Secretariat, in consultation with Ms. Silvia Cartwright. The rules of procedure would be adopted in final form at the twenty-fourth session of the Committee, in January/February 2001.

Suggestion 23/I

Taking into account article 20.1 of the Convention, the Committee requested that the Secretariat explore the possibility of the Committee holding one of its regular sessions in 2002 or 2003, such as the twenty-sixth or twenty-eighth session, outside United Nations Headquarters, and in particular in the Asia-Pacific region, in order to facilitate the consideration of the initial or periodic reports of States parties from that region.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/54/38/Rev.1), chap. I, sect. A.

[2] Ibid., *Fifty-third session, Supplement No. 38* (A/53/38/Rev.1), part II, chap. I, sect. A.

[3] Ibid., A/55/38, chap. I, sect. A.

[4] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/53/38/Rev.1), part two, chap. I, sect. B.

[5] Ibid., *Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 38* (A/54/38/Rev.1), part one, chap. I, sect. B.

[6] Ibid., part two, chap. I, sect. A.

[7] Ibid., sect. B.

[8] A/55/23, chap. I, sect. A.